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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 000362

SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TREASURY FOR LUKAS KOHLER
COMMERCE FOR MARIA RAVIRO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EINV](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH RUSSIAN ABASSADOR

Classified By: Ambassador P. Bridgewater for Reasons 1.5 b and d

1.(U) Summary: On January 31, Ambassador Bridgewater paid a courtesy call on Russian Ambassador to Ghana, Valery Orlov. The Ambassador and Orlov discussed Russia's new role as G-8 chair, investment in Ghana, cooperation with the Ghanaian military, and corruption in West Africa. End Summary.

2.(C) In response to the Ambassador's congratulatory remarks on Russia's new role in the G-8, Orlov said that he hoped that it would mean a greater level of cooperation with the U.S. in Ghana. Specifically, Orlov expressed an interest in becoming more involved with joint peacekeeping and counterterrorism issues.

3.(C) Orlov said that Russia was a relatively new market-based economy and, as such, was not yet ready for investment on a large scale in Ghana. He said, however, that since Russia no longer competed with the West on the ideological front, the time had come to start relations anew on a mutually beneficial basis. In comparing Russian investment to that of the U.S., Orlov noted that determining the impact of Russian investment or government grants was difficult due to the lack of accountability and accurate statistics in the Ghanaian economy. Russia finds it hard to justify a great deal investment in the Ghanaian economy. According to Orlov, the only Russian company operating in Ghana is Mossib, the contractor currently building the new Russian embassy compound.

4.(C) On the topic of military cooperation, Orlov brought up the sale of four Mi-17 helicopters to Ghana in early 2005. He said that during a Russian Ministry of Defense visit to Accra in 2005, both Russian and Ghanaian officials expressed interest in continued cooperation. To date, however, the Ghanaian defense ministry has not requested any further military assistance. He mentioned also that France has expressed a similar interest in the Ghanaian military market.

5.(C) While agreeing with the Ambassador about the prevalence of corruption in West Africa as a whole, Orlov confessed that he did not have a great deal of understanding of the actual level of corruption since he had very little dealings with the business community.

16. (C) While discussing the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) party, Orlov remarked that he had met former president Jerry J. Rawlings once or twice during receptions. However, he said that it had been suggested by his political advisors that he not interact with Rawlings since it would be looked upon unfavorably by the ruling NPP.

17. (C) Comment: Orlov was engaged and animated throughout the meeting, but became markedly guarded when the discussion turned towards Rawlings and the NDC. Orlov's desire to cooperate more closely on counter-terrorism and peacekeeping seemed genuine, however. Post will follow up with appropriate contacts at the Russian Embassy to determine the level of cooperation that can actually be achieved. End Comment.
BRIDGEWATER